

NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY  
BOARD OF VISITORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 30-October 1, 1999

**CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE**

The meeting of the National Fire Academy (NFA) Board of Visitors (BOV) was called to order by Ms. Cynthia A. Wilk, Chairperson, at 8:30 a.m. on September 30, 1999. The following NFA BOV members were present for the meeting:

Cynthia A. Wilk  
Assistant Director  
New Jersey Department of  
Community Affairs  
Division of Codes and Standards  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0802

Dr. Robert S. Fleming  
Professor  
Rowan University  
1406 Heather Lane  
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380

Donald R. Oliver, Fire Chief  
Wilson Fire Rescue Services  
307 West Hines Street  
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

Karl J. Berardi, Captain  
Manchester Fire Department  
Manchester, New Hampshire  
46 Quincy Drive  
Bedford, New Hampshire 03110

Neil Svetanics, Fire Chief  
St. Louis Fire Department  
1421 North Jefferson Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri 63106-2136

Steve Ennis (Alternate)  
National Volunteer Fire Council  
71 Beagle Road  
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22406

Warren McDaniels, Fire Chief  
New Orleans Fire Department  
317 Decatur Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

Robert J. Sledgeski  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Baltimore Fire Fighters Local 734  
1202 Ridgely Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

The following NFA BOV member was unable to attend the meeting:

Gary Tokle (Alternate)  
National Fire Protection Association  
1 Batterymarch Park  
Quincy, Massachusetts 02269

The following FEMA personnel presented briefings or attended the meeting: Richard Marinucci, Kenneth Burris, Denis Onieal, Roxane Deardorff, Ralph King, Ron Face, Hugh Wood, Marjean Meyer, Bruce Hisley, Gerry Bassett, Colleen Heilig, Charles Burkell, Polly Birdsall, and Wayne Powell

### **Administrative Issues:**

Ms. Wilk provided a brief summary of the first *America Burning Recommissioned* meeting that she attended.

The Board will finalize its comments on the Action Plan during the meeting.

The Board dealt with the following correspondence it received:

Letter to Chair, BOV from Mr. Richard Laird of New Jersey  
(Ms. Wilk recused herself and Dr. Fleming led the discussion.)

The BOV thanked Chief Marinucci for his efforts on behalf of USFA. The Board commented on some of the positive changes it has seen since he has been on board. The Board also stated they have been looking forward to working with Chief Burris.

### **Approval of August 3-5 NFA BOV Meeting Minutes:**

Dr. Fleming made a motion to accept the August 3-5, 1999, NFA BOV Meeting minutes as written. Chief Oliver seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **Election of Fiscal Year 2000 Officers:**

Captain Berardi made a motion to keep the Chairperson (Ms. Wilk) and Vice-Chairperson (Dr. Fleming) as is for Fiscal Year 2000. Chief Svetanics seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **Report of and Discussion with Chief Operating Officer:**

The Board held a discussion with Chief Marinucci and the newly appointed USFA Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Kenneth O. Burris Jr., former Chief of the Marietta, Georgia Fire Department. The following items were discussed:

1. With the resignation of Billy Frost, a replacement is needed for the BOV.
2. There are two positions that need to be filled at the National Fire Academy: Deputy Superintendent and Branch Chief and actions are under way to begin to fill them.
3. The Incident Command Specialist position has been filled with Bob Murgallis
4. Congress has approved USFA's funding requests. It looks like there will be some positions available.
5. Chief Burris is optimistic about the future of the USFA and noted that Director Witt is interested in supporting change.

6. The USFA needs to do more planning; Chief Burris requested the BOV's support in planning how USFA will use its funding.
7. The BOV will monitor what steps the NFA is taking to move forward with specific focus on addressing the items in the Action Plan.
8. Chief Oliver raised the issue of including more leadership material in the NFA courses.
9. Copies of the previous BOV Charters were provided for the group's review and later discussion.

### **Overview of Training Evaluation at the National Fire Academy:**

Following an introduction by Dr. Onieal, Polly Birdsall made a PowerPoint presentation, "Overview of Training Evaluation at the National Fire Academy." The presentation included information on the NFA's short-term and long-term evaluations. NFA started conducting long-term evaluations about 2 years ago. It is a model program that is going very well. The long-term evaluations include paired student-supervisor evaluations. Each year, NFA evaluates 10 to 12 courses out of the NFA available offerings. In the 2 years, 33 resident courses have been surveyed--a total of 83 separate offerings. NFA is constrained by the timeframe for the program year. Instructors are evaluated in the short-term evaluations, but not in the long-term evaluations.

Following the presentation, the BOV had a discussion of the training evaluation program with Ms. Birdsall and Dr. Onieal. The discussion included the following issues:

- The first year, long-term evaluations were sent 2 to 3 months after course completion. Because Program Chairs felt that wasn't enough time, they extended it to 6 months. This resulted in fewer responses, so they are sending evaluations at 4 months after course completion in this third year (FY1999).
- The response so far indicates that students and supervisors rate NFA courses very highly in the long-term evaluation. One highlight is that 1 in 4 NFA students go back and formally train their coworkers
- NFA is planning to publish articles on the results. Ms. Birdsall has written several articles and forwarded them through the chain of command.
- In response to a question as to whether the evaluations gather information on a student's NFA course participation's effect on their local community's fire loss numbers, Ms. Birdsall replied that there is a question in the survey addressing this issue; however, it does not apply to all courses.
- Dr. Onieal elaborated on the purpose behind the short-term and long-term evaluations.
- There is a plan for a longer-term evaluation, perhaps aimed at the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) courses.
- A BOV member felt that it would be valuable to post the evaluation on the Web. There may be some administrative/regulatory issues involved with this getting done. The Board felt that this is important to review.

The BOV feels that this is working well. However, there still does not seem to be a method to gather information on NFA's impact on lowering fire risk and loss numbers. The Board felt that this was an important component of the evaluation process.

NFA is going to propose selecting 10 cities and providing city-specific training for their community. The results of this training on the fire problem for that community would then be tracked. This program is still in the conceptual stages.

### **Executive Skills Series: Leading Diverse Communities Beyond Conflict:**

Mr. Chuck Burkell provided a PowerPoint presentation update on NFA's newest executive-level course program, Executive Skills Series: Leading Diverse Communities Beyond Conflict (ESS: LDCBC), a 2-day (16-hour) course. NFA offered the ESS: LDCBC walkthrough immediately prior to the IAFC Fire-Rescue Conference in Kansas City at the end of August. The NFA is now ready to put together the materials for the first delivery in January 2000. Mr. Burkell provided background for the development of the course. The target audience is senior fire service leadership. The impact of this course goes beyond the fire department/agency to the community at large. This course's goal is to promote diversity and a change in the fire service culture.

The plan is to reach 500 to 600 students in the first year. NFA's plan is to have an outside organization or firm responsible for the entire delivery process. The instructors will contact the local hosts for information so they can tie in local concerns to the program delivery.

Mr. Burkell elaborated on the different segments of the course that directly relate to the fire problem in this Nation. Questions asked: Are you sure all populations in your community are equally protected (e.g., socioeconomic, race, gender, etc.)? The students are leveraged to think not just about their responsibility as a fire department, but also their responsibility as a public sector agency.

There was further discussion on the need to teach the fire service how to serve their community best. This, in the long run, will lead to a reduction in fire loss.

It was noted that this course is not meant to change the complexion of the fire service (e.g., race, gender). It is to make the chief fire officers more aware of the specific needs in their community. How can we educate the members of the community how best to protect themselves? Have we prepared ourselves to communicate with our community? This course is not about specific issues (such as sexual harassment, etc.), but is about specific community-related issues of which chief officers need to be aware. The chief officer's critical issue may indeed be gender-related or race-related, but not necessarily. This course is about helping the chief officer identify the critical needs in his/her community.

### **Executive Fire Officer Program:**

Mr. Burkell presented an overview of the Executive Fire Officer Program's selection criteria. This information is in the NFA catalog:

- Chief of Department;
- Second-level senior fire officers;
- Officers who have responsibility for a major function area;
- Battalion chief level officers of IAFC "metro" organizations; and
- Applicant must possess an associate's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning.

NFA just finished the application process for the next fiscal year - 202 people were accepted.

A discussion followed regarding possibilities to extend the program to other levels of officers in the fire department and whether there could be expanded focus on younger members who are newer in the service.

Mr. Burkell and the BOV also discussed the varying points of the EFOP and NFA's other mid-level management courses and on the applied research projects.

There was also discussion regarding long-term feedback on the EFO graduates. There is currently no formalized method for doing this. The Board felt it would be beneficial to gather this kind of information and track the impact and effectiveness of the EFOP on graduates, their fire departments, and their communities. The Board feels that while this may be difficult, it is a task that should be done.

### **Dr. Onieal's Report:**

Dr. Onieal made a report to the BOV which included the following items:

Course Priorities review—The course priority review includes the criteria by which the NFA measures courses. Dr. Onieal discussed the process for establishing course processes.

He also discussed the concept of endorsement. A memo was sent out to the States. They have agreed to come back to him with a plan for endorsement by December 1. The States can submit courses that meet State and local needs for endorsement by the NFA. This will expand the overall outreach to the fire service. It also has the potential to establish a consortium of professional training, similar to what already exists for other professions.

This month, the Pro Board came in and IFSAC is scheduled to come in. NFA is seeking to establish a partnership with both of them.

### **Curriculum and Development Branch Report:**

Ralph King with NFA's Curriculum and Development Branch addressed the group representing Carol Bouma. He informed the BOV that two key personnel recently left-- Steve Marini transferred to another government agency and Romey Brooks retired. Also, Susan Hernandez from EMI has replaced Steve Marini.

Mr. King also told the group about some of the branch's current initiatives. He touched on the priorities review and team approach and emphasized that they are also seeking to do more with distance education. The NFA is trying to assemble the necessary people and resources to set up a more extensive distance education system.

In response to a question regarding whether the NFA is going to tie into any of the interactive simulation technology with the National Guard, Mr. King replied that yes, they had met with a representative, especially regarding EMS-related simulations. The problem is that the program had not been fully developed enough to use at NFA. Mr. King said that if the National Guard can bring its program along to meet what the NFA needs, then it may work.

### **Report from Wayne Powell:**

Wayne Powell addressed the group. Ms. Wilk told the BOV what a good job Mr. Powell had done on gathering information on the history of the fire service and providing it to the *America Burning Revisited* panel.

Mr. Powell provided an overview on the *America Burning* meeting, the USFA Open House, the ongoing discussion on reorganization, and a few other items:

Reorganization--There is a panel of staff, assigned by Rich Marinucci, that is looking at reorganizing the USFA.

Advocacy-- The fire service needs to take a strategic operations planning approach.

America Burning-- Mr. Powell distributed a graphic from the recent *America Burning* meeting that shows a historical timeline for the fire service. He touched on specific highlights that occurred. Mr. Powell reviewed some of the highlights from the first *America Burning*.

Other-- Mr. Powell provided several handout items to the BOV, including information on the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend and the upcoming USFA Open House. One of the handouts is an overview of the events coming up over the next month.

### **BOV Charter:**

After review of previous BOV Charters, it was agreed that there needs to be some changes to the existing charter, specifically with regards to the reporting process, the designated Federal Official, alternate membership, and how the funding of the Board is represented.

Dr. Fleming made a motion the BOV forward their suggested changes to the NFA BOV Charter to Mr. Kenneth Burris. Captain Berardi seconded the motion. The BOV voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **USFA Action Plan:**

While the BOV discussed the Action Plan at the last meeting it did not finalize its comments. BOV members received a summary of what was done at the last meeting and reviewed and discussed the recommendations on a number of action plan items including the following:

Core Mission #1--The group concurred with the wording.

Core Mission #8--Clarification on wording regarding EFO graduates.

Core Mission #14--The group concurred.

Concurred to wording regarding the action plan and need for staff development.

Advocacy - A good management principle needs to be established and followed, specifically relating to the Deputy Superintendent's role.

Core Mission--Linking all of the NFA activities to the fire picture. We would like to see a statement that the research section needs its own core mission. Discussion on wordsmithing (health and safety versus wellness, etc.).

Ms. Wilk requested any further comments. Mr. Ennis made a motion the NFA BOV comments to the Action Plan be forwarded. Dr. Fleming seconded the motion. The BOV voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Ms. Wilk will work on completing the document and forward it to Chief Marinucci.

### **NFA Fire Prevention Activities:**

The BOV received a presentation from a panel of NFA staff. The team includes prevention management, prevention technical, public education, and information management. Wayne Powell provided an overview of NFA's prevention programs and team approach.

Mr. Powell spoke about a new course which will be handed off through the Direct Delivery system. A pilot was held on campus in July.

Bruce Hisley elaborated on courses that are offered on campus and those offered off campus. Logistics limit the number of residential course delivery. For off-campus deliveries, NFA advertises through the FEMA Regions and TRADE. Prevention has never been a very popular course; people are more interested in the operational courses. If we market more to the prevention end, we will see an increase in the number of prevention courses taken (i.e., change our marketing strategy).

In response to a question regarding the content of Inspection Principles, Mr. Hisley responded that we teach principles and strategies and understanding application of codes. We can't teach any one code. The course also exposes students to other codes in the country--there are other codes and other solutions.

The group discussed the number of times the course is offered and the saturation rate. Mr. Hisley believes NFA can reach more people with the off-campus offerings, rather than offer it more times on campus. Again, this requires a marketing change.

Mr. Hisley then discussed *Principles of Fire Protection*. The course is only offered on campus because of the extensive use of the lab. Seventy-five percent of the students who apply eventually will get in. The Plans Review course is offered only on campus and is offered five times a year. There was discussion on rationale for offering courses on campus versus off campus.

The *Fire Safe Building Design* CD-ROM was designed strictly for off-campus use. Mr. Powell also told the group that all of USFA's Technical Reports are on a CD-ROM. He also elaborated that the *Fire Safety Building Design* course was not developed for the fire service, but was developed for architects.

There was discussion on turning over some of the courses to the States to try and reach more people. A BOV member stated that we need to be justifying the courses we keep on campus and look for ways to get more courses off campus.

Mr. Bassett presented an overview of the courses in his discipline, including a new self-study course. Part of the plan is to give each student that takes an NFA course a copy of this self-study course. NFA is also looking at high-risk groups (elderly, children, socioeconomic factors, etc.) and programs that NFA can use to reach them through public efforts. Mr. Bassett said he has one of the smallest, most focused groups. In terms of numbers, it may not be high. But in terms of quality and value, it is extremely high.

Ms. Heilig presented an overview of the courses in her discipline. She also elaborated on the courses within the priorities review system. She is looking to develop some simulation scenarios as well. She is seeking approval to have the 2-day course offered as part of the State Weekend Program.



### **Fiscal Year 2001 Course Schedule:**

Hugh Wood and Marjean Meyer addressed the group. NFA's main objective is to deliver courses. The reason we don't have courses every week is mostly due to holidays. We try to maximize every timeframe that we have. Another consideration is bed space.

The group discussed the pros and cons of 2-week courses versus other lengths of time. One member proposed 9-day courses for volunteers--they could come in on Friday night, have instruction on Saturday, Sunday, and the rest of the week.

### **Annual Report:**

The Board agreed to work on the Annual Report Saturday, October 2, 1999.

### **Adjournment:**

Mr. Ennis made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4 p.m. on October 1, 1999. Chief McDaniels seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.